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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002605

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: PUBLIC ATTACKS ON DTP OFFICES FOLLOWING
LATEST PKK VIOLENCE

REF: A. ANKARA 2604

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2589

[1](#)C. ANKARA 2595

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 (b),(d)
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1.(C) Summary: Following the October 21 PKK attacks in Hakkari province (ref A), some Turks have attacked pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) offices throughout the country. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), opposition parties and the media have pointedly urged DTP to condemn the PKK; President Gul reportedly conveyed that message to DTP leader Ahmet Turk during an October 22 meeting. In a subsequent DTP press conference, Turk reiterated DTP's opposition to a cross-border operation (CBO) and called for a comprehensive approach to solve Turkey's long-standing Kurdish issue. He did not, however, condemn the PKK and the party expressed only tepid regret over the latest attacks. According to one AKP leader, the GOT is concerned that public demonstrations could deteriorate into attacks on Kurds. If DTP does not take a firm, anti-terrorism stance, the party may lose its best chance to help resolve peacefully Turkey's Kurdish problem. The time is now. End summary.

2.(U) Following the October 21 PKK attack, in which 12 were killed and many wounded, some Turks have channeled their anger by marching on, and attacking, DTP headquarters throughout Turkey:

--At 3 a.m. October 22, arsonists set fire to DTP offices in Istanbul's Fatih sub-province. Police evacuated the building.

--October 21 in Bursa, approximately 1,000 people threw rocks at the DTP office, and several people attempted to enter the building through the roof. Police prevented the mob from setting fire to the building.

-October 21 in Erzurum, approximately 10,000 people marched toward the DTP office. The governor and mayor unsuccessfully tried to calm down the demonstrators. The police used pepper gas to stop the crowd, but 150 protesters managed to reach DTP headquarters. After a group of soldiers reportedly told them that "martyrs" were their sons but that DTPers, too, were Turkish citizens, the demonstrators left peacefully.

--Police used pepper gas to disperse a crowd of 2000 marching toward DTP's office in Elazig.

3.(C) All quarters have pointedly pressed DTP to unequivocally condemn the PKK following the most recent attack. On October 21, we contacted DTP Group Chair Sirri Sakik by telephone to reiterate our past messages urging DTP to take a firm stance against PKK violence (refs B, C). Sakik said he understands our position and would convey the message to party leadership. On October 21 on "Kanal 24" news, PM Erdogan called on the PKK to lay down arms and work out a solution in Parliament.

4.(U) In a DTP press conference following his meeting with President Gul, Ahmet Turk reiterated the party's opposition to a CBO (ref C), and said resolution of the Kurdish problem requires a comprehensive approach that embraces economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions. Though Turk said violence is not a solution, he did not condemn the PKK. Earlier in the day, DTP Deputy Group Chair Selahattin Demirtas told the press that PM Erdogan had not proposed any new approach to resolve the long-standing Kurdish issue. Demirtas accused Erdogan of, on the one hand, appealing to the PKK to resolve the issue in Parliament while, on the other, using rhetoric about a single country, flag, and state that many Kurds find inflammatory. Demirtas also called on Erdogan and political parties to respect the DTP and put an end to the psychological pressure on the party.

5.(C) Some fear the attacks on DTP offices could signal a wider potential problem. AKP Vice Chair Saban Disli told us the societal tension is so high that a small incident could spark widespread problems. He worried that public anger,

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fueled by nationalist opposition, as well as talking heads - including former generals - pushing a nationalistic agenda on TV, could turn the spontaneous demonstrations into something more ugly, including attacks on Kurds.

6.(C) Comment: DTP's moment of truth has arrived. The party has let pass several opportunities to condemn without hedging recent PKK terrorist attacks that have killed over 70 Turks. Facing enormous pressure to react to the latest attacks, President Gul responded evenhandedly by meeting with DTP party leader Turk on an equal footing with all other party leaders represented in parliament. The Embassy, the EU, the media, and others, have pressed DTP to seize this opportunity to move toward resolving the conflict by condemning PKK violence. The public is in no mood for anything less than a full denunciation. If the DTP fails to deliver, the party will have lost its best chance in years to contribute to peaceful resolution of Turkey's Kurdish issue. End comment.

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